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Nine-year-old Avena Coughlan gives Oilers forward Luke Gazdic a haircut under the supervision of stylist Elizabeth Kitschke in advance of the Hair Massacure event at West Edmonton Mall set for Friday. Coughlan and Gazdic teamed up to raise money for the event and have so far netted $15,000, which will go to the Stollery Children's Hospital Foundation and the Make-a-Wish Foundation. RYAN TUMILTY/METRO

Please stay, Rexall Place

Survey. Edmontonians respond overwhelmingly in favour of keeping the building around after Oilers' new home opens

RYAN TUMILTY
ryan.tumilty@metronews.ca

Edmontonians want to keep Rexall Place standing even after a new arena opens downtown.

A survey of 26,000 people conducted online, released Thursday, showed only 14 per cent feel the building should be torn down, with 40 per cent hoping to see it repurposed and 30 per cent suggesting it should be kept as is.

The survey is part of a broader strategy Northlands is undertaking as it tries to figure out what to do with the building after the Oilers leave to the new downtown arena.

When asked if they thought the building could survive, 46 per cent of people said yes, while 32 per cent said no and 22 per cent said they did not know.

Northlands CEO Tim Reid said he takes the results as a sign that residents want Northlands to search for a middle ground and they don't want a fight.

"What people are telling us is that a battle between two large arenas in Edmonton is not something they want to see," he said.

Reid said the committee looking at the arena is going to travel to a few Canadian cities to look at what they've done. They've hired financial firm KPMG to look at the costs of everything from demolition to repurposing the building.

Coun. Tony Caterina, who represents the area, said he's glad Northlands is involving the community and trying to ensure the building doesn't just sit idle.

"Many community members have felt that Northlands was theirs and we were trying to remove something that is very near and dear to their hearts," he said.

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NEWS

Car crash. Two deaths shock Leduc

Friends and family are remembering two men killed in a fatal Leduc crash Wednesday as loving fathers who loved their homes in Newfoundland.

Harold May Jr. of Badger, Nfld., and Shawn Briffett of Glovertown, Nfld., were killed after the taxi they were riding in collided head-on with a pickup truck in Leduc early Wednesday morning.

The two men, both 37 years old, were found dead on scene. A third man, 35, was transported to hospital with critical injuries, along with the 38-year-old taxi driver.

Betty Briffett, Shawn's aunt, called her nephew a "beautiful father" to his six-year-old daughter Sophie and a lover of the outdoors.

"He was a great person," she said. "He loved the outdoors — hunting and fishing and stuff like that."

Briffett said it was a hard decision for Shawn to move away from Newfoundland for work. "If he could have worked in Newfoundland, he would have in a heartbeat," she said.

Badger mayor Mike Patey called May's death shocking for the entire community.

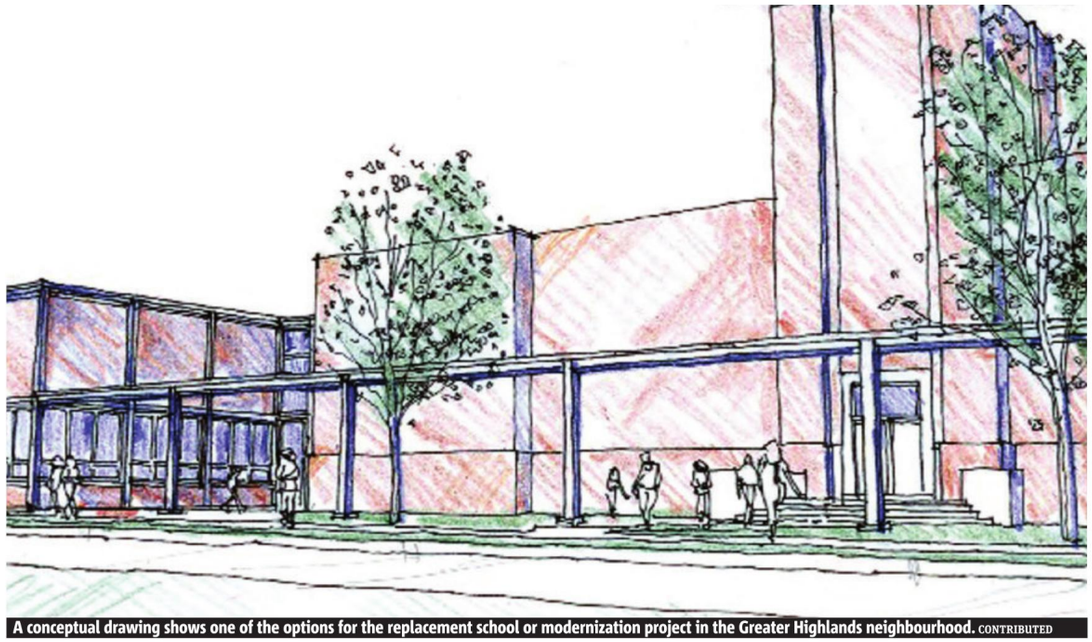
As a volunteer firefighter for the past 10 years, Patey said May was a fixture in town.

"I knew him personally," said Patey. "I had a son the same age and they graduated together."

Patey said it's a difficult decision for many to leave their community to work out of town, but it's the reality nowadays. "That's a part of life for us fellows. I did it when I was a young man."

The three men had been returning from work at Snap Lake diamond mine after a two-week shift.

LEAH HOLOIDAY/METRO



A conceptual drawing shows one of the options for the replacement school or modernization project in the Greater Highlands neighbourhood. CONTRIBUTED

Replacement school plan still on table

Greater Highland. Parents offered three options for consolidated facility

LEAH HOLOIDAY
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Parents from Edmonton's Greater Highland neighbourhood will once again be able to offer their two cents when it comes to consolidating area schools as the city's public school district considers a major change in the community.

EPSB released three possible concepts for the Greater Highlands neighbourhood that would affect families in three community schools: Highlands School, Mount Royal School and Montrose School.

The three schools, which were included in a similar debate last year, have a combined attendance of approximately 520 students that would — according to the concepts — be consolidated into either one replacement school or a modernized version of Highlands.

Roland Labbe of EPSB planning said the district heard from parents last year when they were considering a replacement school for three different communities and wanted to continue the conversation in Highlands this year.

"In our three-year capital plan, we've identified a replacement school for each of the years generically without naming the location, so we thought this would give us a jump for our possible next request," said Labbe.

Mount Royal School parent and father of three Dave Zylstra said this time around, parents seem to be defeated and accepted that the schools will be consolidated.

"It seems like a lot of people have just lost hope and it's going to be put through, regardless of what's said," he said.

The options

The three options include two that would see Highlands modernized into a K-9 school and a third option that would see Mount Royal demolished and replaced with a new K-9 school. All students would be consolidated in each option.

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City admin seeks green light for more real-time transit tracking

City hall. Edmonton is still waiting on word of possible provincial funding for Smart Fare

STEPHANIE DUBOIS
stephanie.dubois@metronews.ca

Edmonton transit riders could be able to track more buses in the city in real time if council goes ahead with a suggestion by city administration.

According to a report going to council on Feb. 25, city administration is suggesting that it be allowed to go ahead with installation of the real-time tracking equipment on city buses this June while it waits for a provincial funding decision on the Smart Fare project.

"This capital profile change would allow administration to proceed immediately with the expenditure of funds approved for 2015 in the Smart Bus project profile and maintain a project schedule that provides for the quickest possible deployment of both the Smart Bus and Smart Fare solutions," reads the report.

Council decided to give dollars to both the Smart Fare and Smart Bus programs back in December after city administration argued for the cost savings if the two projects were done in conjunction.

Looking to kill two birds with one stone, city officials are waiting to hear from the province if the GreenTRIP dollars they are hoping for to fund the regional Smart Fare project is approved before they install the equipment to be used for both initiatives.

"By starting with the implementation on the Smart Bus equipment, it prepares us for Smart Fare, and by doing this now, it actually gives us the most accelerated schedule to get both projects done," said Ken Koropeski with ETS.

However, city officials are asking council to consider going ahead with Smart Bus installation due to the numerous negative impacts — like the further delay of Smart Fare — that could arise if they wait for provincial dollars, reads the report.

The Smart Fare program is a regional project between Edmonton, the City of St. Albert and Strathcona County, but it is relying on GreenTRIP dollars to move forward.

Follow Stephanie Dubois on Twitter @MetroSteph

Quoted

"Smart Fare is very high on the priority list for the whole Capital Region board."

Ken Koropeski with ETS

City administration is asking council to change the wording in a capital profile so it can go ahead with Smart Bus installation while it waits for a decision from the province on GreenTRIP dollars, which would help fund the Smart Fare project. METRO FILE

Solutions in works for LRT escalator problems

Escalators under maintenance. METRO FILE

Tired of that escalator heading into the LRT station being shut down? City officials say breakdowns and vandalism are the cause — but they're working on it.

The inconsistency or closures of some of the LRT system's moving steps has been a point of contention for some Edmontonians, who have turned to social media and their councillors to voice their concerns.

According to a city report, the reliability of escalators in the system was at 83 per cent in 2014, with vandalism and age-related component failures often the root of the problem.

Mayor Don Iveson and Coun. Michael Walters have brought this issue forward to city administration in recent meetings, looking for answers as to why the moving steps are often closed.

But city administration says they're working on some potential solutions to the problem.

Transit users will soon see a "protective prototype tent," which will reduce the sand and snow coming into the LRT station, at Century Park, reads the report. Real-time elevator and escalator reporting, as well as a new maintenance contract, should help improve escalator reliability.

Brendan Van Alstine, head of the Edmonton Transit Riders' Union, says there's concern about accessibility for riders if the escalators remain unfixed.

"It would be nice to have a little bit more concrete details, but as long as they fix it in the long term, that would be good," he said.

STEPHANIE DUBOIS/METRO

By the numbers

19

The total amount of downtime to fix an escalator is an average of 19 days, says the city.

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The province will ask Albertans for their opinions on a combined driver's licence and health card later this year.
RYAN TUMILTY/METRO

Province consulting on one-card approach

ID. Idea would bring driver's licence and health card together

RYAN TUMILTY
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The Alberta government is inching closer to having one card to rule them all, with plans for consultation on an identity card pulling health-care and driver's-licensing information together.

The government has posted a tender asking for an outside firm to hold consultations with Albertans on the issue. They emphasized no decisions are made on the issue and this is just another step forward.

"A public consultation would determine what Albertans' priorities are in terms of having something like that or not," said Calli Stromner, a spokeswoman for Service Alberta.

She said the idea is to create simplicity, both for government and for citizens.

"Instead of fishing around for your Alberta Health Care card, you could just present your single government-issued ID," she said. "It has been one of those things that has been on their business plan for a number of years. Other jurisdictions have gone the way of a blended card."

Quoted

"Instead of fishing around for your Alberta Health Care card, you could just present your single government-issued ID."

Calli Stromner, a spokeswoman for Service Alberta

Elsewhere

British Columbia started their transition to a one-card system in 2013 and have given residents until 2018 to replace their existing cards.

- Their card has more security features, and the province hopes it will also reduce fraud in the health-care system.

She said they're also consulting with other provinces who have made similar moves.

Edmontonian Darren Mann said he would welcome the change. He said the extra cards can be cumbersome and he would appreciate simplifying them.

"It make sense," he said. "I lost my wallet once, and if you could get one replacement instead of two, that would be good."

"Everyone has the potential to be a mentor." Sarah Chan

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LGBTQ rights. Education minister side-steps questions on GSA memo

Alberta's education minister is refusing to address a memo being circulated by Catholic school trustees that claims any legislation concerning gay-straight alliances (GSA) would intrude on their rights.

Metro has previously provided a copy of the memo to a staff member in Education Minister Gordon Dirks' office and written two stories on the matter.

But Dirks said in a news scrum Thursday he wouldn't "comment on any individual, specific group, other than to say I've met with a broad range of stakeholders … a broad spectrum of individuals who have an interest and concern in this matter."

Dirks has been touring around the province and has met with members of already established gay-straight alliances in certain public schools.

The Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association said in its controversial memo that the province already has the "strongest anti-bullying language in Canada" and that "no additional legislation is necessary."

Dr. Kris Wells, co-director of the Institute for Sexual Minority Studies and Services at the University of Alberta, has said the document "really does draw a line in the sand."

Reached Thursday, Wells said it's time for the government to take action to provide "unqualified support" for GSAs.

"That's what the surveys and the polls show Albertans want and that's what the government needs to deliver," he said.

"If they're concerned about these so-called complex legal issues, well, those school districts and boards that don't want to do this work can take the government to court, rather than putting the onus on the students to go to court for their own rights."

But Dirks said he had plans for further meetings.

"I'm continuing to do that this week.... Eventually, a decision will be made with what we're doing going forward with regards to that."

JEREMY NOLAIS/METRO

Calgary parking software best option for Edmonton: Official

Calgary's pay-by-plate machines were tested on city streets as part of a pilot program over the last year. METRO FILE

Infrastructure. New pay-by-plate tech could come to city streets in spring

RYAN TUMILTY
ryan.tumilty@metronews.ca

Edmonton will likely turn to our southern neighbours to run new pay-by-plate parking technology, as city administration is recommending a deal with the City of Calgary's ParkPlus system.

City councillors will be asked next week to approve the start of negotiations with Calgary on a licensing deal for their ParkPlus software.

Acting director of parking management Bohdan Maslo said the system, developed in-house at the City of Calgary, is simply the best option.

"We did do a survey of other Canadian municipalities, and it was the only proven solution used in Canada," he said.

The city has closed a tender for the actual curbside parking machines, but regardless of which company is selected as the winner, ParkPlus will run the back end of the system.

"We're able to pick whatever equipment best meets the needs of the City of Edmonton, and then ParkPlus software is able to integrate them," said Maslo.

Calgary Coun. Gian-Carlo Carra, who sits on the board of directors for the city's parking authority, said the city is proud of their system and the benefit it could provide to taxpayers.

"There's going to be a lot of people out there trying to build a better mousetrap, but right now we've got the best one on the market," he said.

Maslo said the city would soon select a winner for their actual machines and hopes to have them on the streets later this spring.

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Montana. Move to abolish death penalty gets key vote

Legislation to abolish Montana's death penalty received a significant boost this week as the bill, which would impact Canadian Ronald Smith, passed a major hurdle.

The judiciary committee in the lower house of Montana's two-tier legislature stalled earlier bills to abolish the death penalty in 2007, 2009, 2011 and 2013. They had been introduced and then passed by the state senate. This year the bill, which was introduced by Republican Rep. David (Doc) Moore, started out on the house side and made it past the judiciary committee by an 11-10 vote. Moore says the bill, which would abolish executions and replace them with a sentence of life imprisonment with no chance of parole, must now be voted on by the state house of representatives no later than Feb. 27. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Red Deer man

Smith, originally from Red Deer, was convicted in Montana in 1983 for shooting to death two cousins while he was high on drugs and alcohol near East Glacier, Mont.

Fatal house explosion

Better family violence programs needed: Report

A report into a fatal house explosion is recommending that police improve how they deal with family violence.

The report released Thursday says Dwayne Poirier strangled his wife, Cathie Heard, and then removed a cap from a natural-gas line. Their home in northeast Edmonton exploded like a bomb in June 2010. Provincial court Judge James Wheatley says Poirier, 46, and Heard, 47, had obtained several emergency protection orders against each other, which they always discontinued. THE CANADIAN PRESS

311 Explorer tool a major chance for developers

Data. Website allows people to track open complaints, view issues in their street, neighbourhood, ward

This map accessed through the 311 Explorer website shows open pothole claims in the Strathcona neighbourhood. SCREENSHOT

The city released a treasure trove of data on 311 calls that should help create new apps and other tools, according to a local expert.

Mack Male, who has used other information from the city's open data catalogue in the past, said the 311 data is a huge step forward.

"There's a ton of data here. Over 100,000 data points in what they've uploaded, and this is just a subset of the overall data they have," he said.

Male said there is unlimited potential for both the city itself and citizens to learn from the data.

"Any open data set is interesting to citizens, and there are certainly geeks like me who will do things with it," he said.

As Metro was first to report, the 311 explorer website the city unveiled allows people to track open complaints and view issues in their street, neighbourhood or city ward.

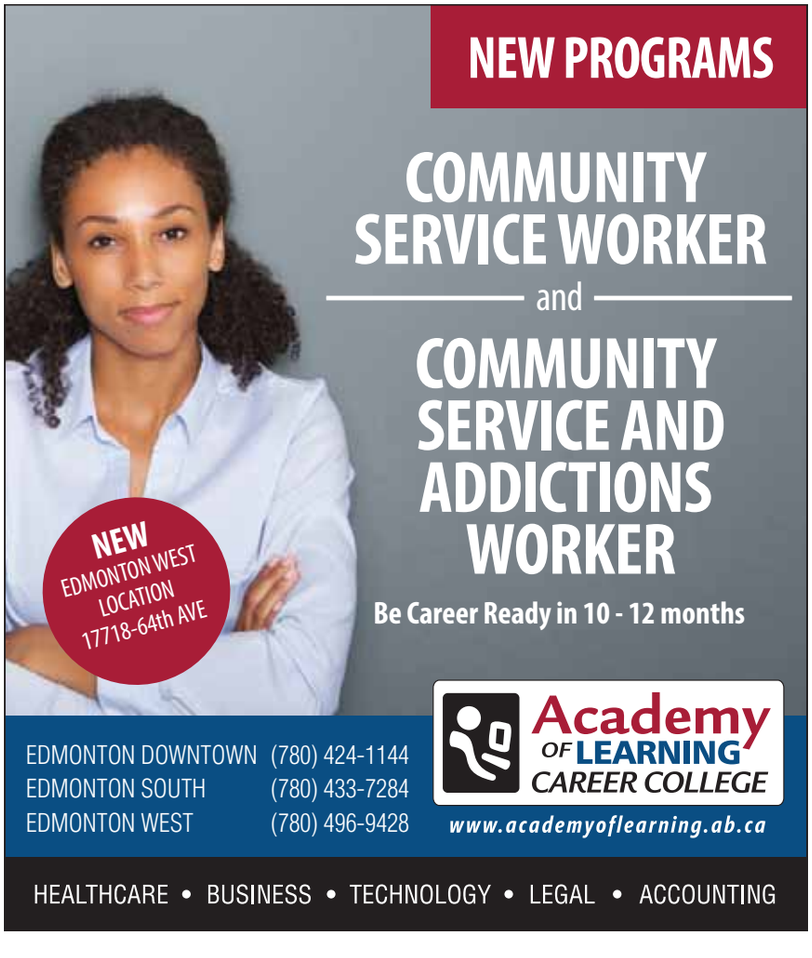
Director of call-centre operations Maria Schrijvers said releasing the data is in line with the city's overarching goal of being more accessible.

"One of the key goals of the city is to make more information publicly available and easily searchable," she said.

RYAN TUMILTY/METRO

Hack-A-Thon

The city is hosting a Hack-A-Thon at the Stanley Milner Library on Saturday in recognition of International Open Data Day.



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ADVERTISING FEATURE

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The trend is not new: each year, thousands of Canadians flee the cold and the snow, heading south to sun destinations for weeks or months at a time. While many dream of owning a property in the South, the uncertainty surrounding the entire process can make taking the next step somewhat daunting. Not to worry! Since 2010 the Canadian company HolaEcuador has been helping Canadians succeed in acquiring their own piece of paradise.

GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT: KEY FACTORS

The Canadian company HolaEcuador understood the challenges faced by Canadian snowbirds and now facilitates the sun property acquisition process. After having visited Mexico, Costa Rica and Panama, company co-owners Gordon Poole and Yves Cormier chose Ecuador as the ideal location. The quality of the country's infrastructure, incredible biodiversity, low cost of living, beautiful landscapes, accessible and modern healthcare system and year-round mild climate were the decisive factors.

"Since 2010 we have helped hundreds of Canadians acquire a property on the Pacific coast of Ecuador", says Mr. Cormier, VP Sales and Marketing. "We are literally creating an entire seaside village. Of the 1,700 properties that we had available at the start of the project, only 700 remain unsold. And now with the majority of the site infrastructure completed, home construction is ramping up quickly."

Mr. and Mrs. Oulianov purchased their property in HolaEcuador's urban development. "The ability to sign a Canadian contract was reassuring for us", indicates Mrs. Oulianov. "Furthermore, the HolaEcuador representatives here in our area answered all of our questions and helped us throughout the entire purchase process. The whole experience was very positive!" The following comments were shared by Mrs. Boucher, who felt reassured by the progress of the construction of her house and the project in general: "What was promised, was delivered! The project is moving forward

Mr. and Mrs. Oulianov, HolaEcuador Clients

quickly and the promoters work with the utmost precaution and make the proper decisions.", she adds.

GOOD TIME TO INVEST

For now, Ecuador remains a relatively well-kept secret. Properties in Ecuador are much more affordable than in similar tourist destinations, which is one of the main reasons that Canadian travellers and investors are flocking to the region. "Prices reflect what was available in Costa Rica 15 years ago, but in a country where first-rate and modern infrastructure is already in place" confirms Mr. Poole. "Further, the Ecuadorian government is very stable and the currency is the US dollar, which is also very reassuring for investors.", he adds.

All that said, prices are rising quickly with the current real estate boom in the region. The Oulianovs wanted to act quickly and take advantage of the favourable market. "The development itself is spectacular - an endless beautiful beach, lots of parks and gardens, services available right on the site, and a ton of activities available in the region. We're convinced that this will be a fantastic community in a secure and comfortable environment."

TO GET MORE INFORMATION

"At HolaEcuador's informational seminar I was pleased to discover the high level of professionalism of the developers and the overall quality of the project. In addition to providing lots of interesting information about Ecuador in general, Mr. Poole also provided an in-depth look into this residential project and he took the time to answer numerous questions from the participants. The information that was provided at the seminar left me with a great deal of confidence to take the next steps in realizing my dream." says Al Hendley.

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Canadian project in Ecuador

Corporate taxes

NDP launches online petition to fight tax freeze

The Alberta NDP is launching an online petition to urge Premier Jim Prentice to reverse his decision to not hike corporate taxes.

NDP Leader Rachel Notley says it's unfair for Prentice to freeze corporate taxes and oil royalties while signalling there will be hikes in personal income taxes and user fees.

Prentice has said hiking Alberta's 10 per cent corporate tax would harm the economy at a time it is already reeling from billions of dollars in lost revenue due to low oil.

Notley says hiking the tax by even one percentage point would deliver $500 million in revenue. THE CANADIAN PRESS

ISIL

White House highlights Canadian mom's project

The efforts of a grieving Canadian mother were highlighted at a White House summit this week as an example of how to turn the tide in the online war against ISIL.

According to some participants at the three-day summit on countering violent extremism, it's been a lopsided fight. They say the terror group has dominated on the battlefield of modern media.

One presenter pointed out a rare response to that online onslaught of jihadist propaganda: Christianne Boudreau's participation in a video about the death of her son in Syria.

The young man from Calgary was one of an estimated 20,000 people from 100 countries who went to fight with ISIL. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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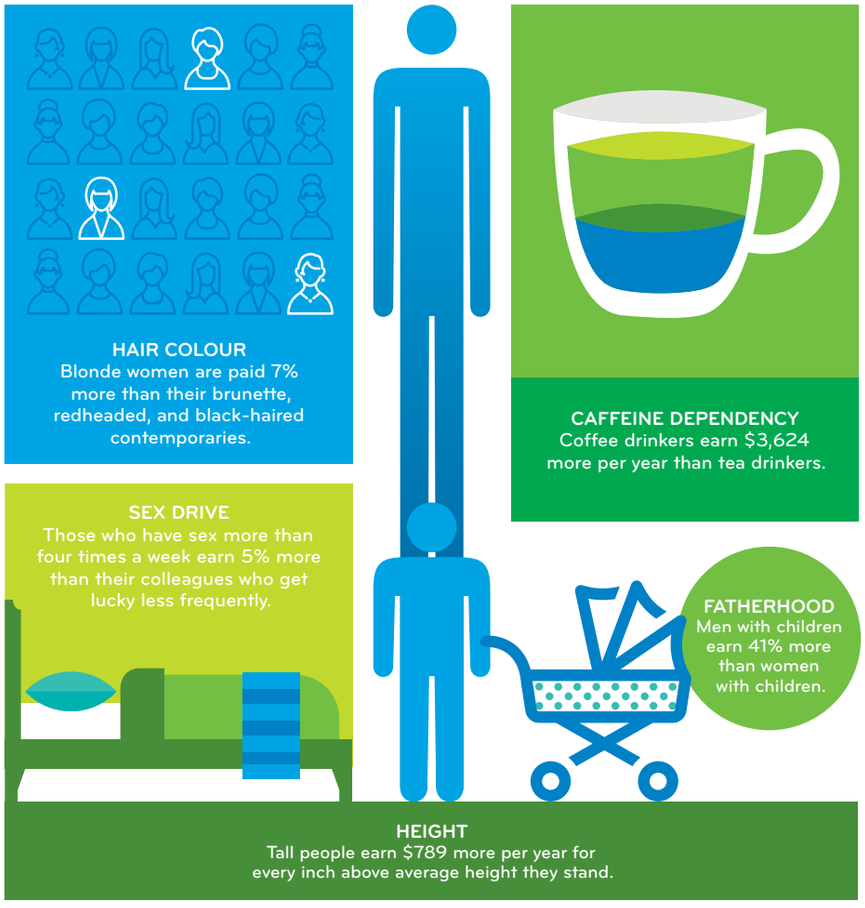

THOUGHTS? TWEET US @WORKOPOLIS
For references, view the full article at workopolis.com

WORKOPOLIS
Let's get to work

The McDougall United Church was one of Edmonton's first when it was built in 1910 — nearly 105 years ago. METRO FILE

Options few for historic church

McDougall United. Hope fading as repair bills mount; there are presently no plans to save structure

RYAN TUMILTY
ryan.tumilty@metronews.ca

Edmonton's historic McDougall United Church could be living on its last prayer, as costs mount for the century-old building's repairs with no money on the horizon.

The church first came to councillors last year, asking for the city to take ownership of the building and responsibility for what was then estimated at between $8 million and $12 million in repairs.

Councillors declined to purchase the building, but did offer to help get a more detailed assessment of the structure's condition.

That assessment paints a worse picture, with the repairs now estimated to be between $18.4 million and $25.4 million.

Coun. Andrew Knack said the building is a treasured historic resource, but there is simply no money to save it.

"I don't think there is anybody who wants to see that church come down, but with that said there's only so many things we can do," he said.

Coun. Mike Nickel said the church has to take some responsibility for not keeping up with the maintenance on the building. He said helping now is simply beyond the city's resources.

"The city isn't floating in cash. I don't see a way of bailing them out," he said.

Administration explored the notion of a historical designation on the building, but while the church wants to preserve it, they're worried the designation wouldn't bring enough in grants and ultimately hurt them in the long run.

"The Church Council sees the building and land as financial assets, which may need to be leveraged to support the relocation of the congregation if the building becomes unusable," reads the administration's report.

Opening mass

1910

The church opened in 1910 and had a congregation of about 2,000 people at the time. It now sees about 120 to 140 parishioners on Sundays.

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Education Minister Gordon Dirks says changing plans to build full-scale schools has nothing to do with criticism that modular-based starter schools were lower quality. METRO FILE

Dirks standing behind 'outstanding' starters

Starter schools. Edmonton, Calgary boards are concerned about the new sites

JEREMY NOLAIS
jeremy.nolais@metronews.ca

Alberta's education minister says school boards made a "compelling argument" to skip construction of "starter schools" but continues to reject any notion that modular-based buildings weren't up to par.

Gordon Dirks' comments came Thursday, one day after his ministry surprised many with an announcement that it would proceed straight to erecting full-scale facilities in 12 Calgary and Edmonton communities. Previously, those neighbourhoods were to see starter schools opened that would likely have lacked proper gymnasiums, libraries and learning common areas.

In response, both Calgary's public and Catholic school boards — as well as their peer boards in Edmonton — wrote letters expressing concerns about the sites.

But Dirks reiterated previous statements that starter schools are a viable option and didn't rule out moving ahead with such developments in other areas in the future.

"This had nothing to with the quality of the facilities — starter schools are outstanding facilities," he said. "This is all about responding to the requests from school boards who, having done further analysis on their parts, requested that we move to full-build so that we could get more spaces opened quicker."

The full-build schools will house between 600 and 900 students apiece, far more than the 250 anticipated to fit inside starter facilities. The schools come at a time when student populations have surged in Alberta's major centres.

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Former Conservative MP Dean Del Mastro leaves court after a sentencing hearing on Thursday in Lindsay, Ont. Del Mastro was found guilty of overspending in his 2008 election campaign then trying to cover it up. FRED THORNHILL/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Former MP faces year of jail time

Del Mastro. Prosecutor seeks to send 'clear message' about campaign overspending

As a Crown prosecutor sought to have Dean Del Mastro jailed up to a year for his campaign overspending convictions, the former Conservative MP's lawyer vehemently argued the penalty would be far too harsh for a case he claimed did not involve electoral fraud.

The spirited submissions were made Thursday at a sentencing hearing for Del Mastro, who was found guilty last fall of violating the Canada Elections Act during the 2008 campaign.

The Crown said it was essential that the former politician's punishment deliver a clear message. "Nothing less than a period of imprisonment of nine to 12 months would adequately reflect the gravity of the offences and the degree of his responsibility," said prosecutor Tom Lemon.

Lemon asked Del Mastro be required to pay $10,000 to the Peterborough Conservative Party Electoral District Association to reimburse money he "fraudulently obtained" for a contract with a consulting firm.

Quoted

"Anything less than real jail would fall short of properly denouncing his conduct and adequately deterring him and others from committing these or similar offences."

Prosecutor Tom Lemon

Del Mastro — Prime Minister Stephen Harper's one-time point man on defending the Tories against allegations of electoral fraud — has maintained his innocence throughout his trial. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Saskatchewan

Reserve where 2 died in fire had fire truck but no crew

A Saskatchewan reserve where two children were killed in a blaze that didn't get a response from firefighters has a working fire truck but no proper equipment or a crew trained to use it.

While the house burned early Tuesday, the truck sat in the snow. The volunteer fire department in nearby Loon Lake didn't respond, because service to the reserve was cut weeks earlier over unpaid bills.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Budget. Feds commit another $10M to ads

The latest federal spending estimates show that four federal government departments have been given another $11 million for advertising as the current fiscal year-end approaches.

The ad spending splurge comes amid large campaigns promoting Conservative family tax measures that have not yet been approved by Parliament and aggressive Defence department recruitment ads that dovetail with current Conservative anti-terrorism messaging.

In total, the Conservatives have now committed $65 million to advertising this fiscal year, which ends March 31.

The total would be higher but Industry Canada appears to have thought better of spending $6.5 million earmarked for a "consumer initiatives" campaign, returning the money to the overall ad envelope.

Liberal finance critic Scott Brison groused that with the 2015 federal budget delayed until at least April amid plunging oil prices, the government's priorities are skewed.

"With the Canadian economy flatlined, Canadians need action, not more 'action plan' ads," he said in a phone interview. "They're spending more time writing ads than they are writing a budget."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Kenney praises anti-terrorism bill

Security. More homegrown terror attacks a likelihood, says defence minister

Defence Minister Jason Kenney sang the praises of the federal government's anti-terror bill Thursday as he used his maiden speech to Canada's military establishment to warn that more homegrown terror attacks are likely.

The country is engaged in a long-term ideological struggle with radical Islam, Kenney told the annual Ottawa gathering hosted by the Conference of Defence Associations Institute.

"We need only to look to Copenhagen, to Paris, to Brussels and to Sydney," Kenney said. The notion that western civilization and style of government are never going to be challenged is wrongheaded, he added. Canada's geographic remoteness, prosperity and pluralism "have given Canadians reason to think that we can avoid real threats to our peaceable dominion. Yet we face a global movement that quite literally defies reason." Kenney, who took over from Rob Nicholson earlier this month, says the country "shouldn't overreact to this threat, nor should we underreact."

Debate over the government's proposed Bill C-51, which would increase the powers of security agencies, notably the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), began earlier this week in the House of Commons.

The concerns of the bill's critics are exaggerated, Kenney said. "We are taking all of these steps while respecting the rights of Canadians."

New Democrats oppose the legislation. The Liberals have said they will support it but promise to fix some of the flaws if they form government after this year's election. One of the loudest complaints about the bill is that it lacks additional oversight of intelligence services to prevent possible excesses. The government says no new mechanisms or bodies are needed beyond what already exists.

Bill C-51 is the government's response to the killing last October of two Canadian soldiers, one of whom died during the Oct. 22 attack on Parliament Hill. The bill is meant to counter the threat of homegrown radicalism. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Budget

New figures show the country's three major national security institutions were collectively unable to spend $11 billion of their budgets over the last eight years.

- Kenney dismissed the argument over lapsed funding, saying all departments do it as part of the budget process.

It's Lucky the Bison knocking

Sandy Melanson pets a bison at her front door in Dryden, Ont., on Tuesday. Melanson says the runaway bison from a nearby ranch came up the driveway and right to their front door. She says the animal, named Lucky, has wandered away a few times from the Northern Buffalo Ranch down the road. HANDOUT/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quebec

Family of strip-searched teen girl to sue school board

The lawyer representing the family of a 15-year-old girl who was strip-searched at a Quebec City high school says they intend to take the school board to court.

Lawyer Francois David Bernier says the high school misinterpreted government guidelines on searching students and humiliated his client. The school proceeded with the search after officials suspected her of selling drugs.

The school board said in a news release that administrators at the Neufchatel high school followed government and police guidelines for conducting school strip searches.

The government guidelines, however, do not specifically mention naked searches.

Bernier said he has not officially filed any documents in court and is still evaluating the damage done to his client.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Anti-marijuana lawsuit filed

Colorado Rep. Jonathan Singer, D-Longmont, speaks during a news conference in Denver in reaction to the announcement that a federal lawsuit is being filed early Thursday on behalf of two Colorado citizens to shut down the state's $800-million-a-year marijuana industry.
DAVID ZALUBOWSKI/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Superbug cases linked to tainted medical tools

Antibiotic resistance. Incompletely sterilized endoscope carries lethal bacteria

A "superbug" outbreak suspected in the deaths of two patients at a Los Angeles hospital has raised questions about the adequacy of the procedures for disinfecting a type of medical instrument used on more than a half-million people in the U.S. every year.

At least seven people — two of whom died — have been infected by a potentially lethal, antibiotic-resistant strain of bacteria after undergoing endoscopic procedures at Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center between October and January, and more than 170 other patients may have been exposed as well, UCLA said.

The germ is known as Carbapenem-resistant Enterobacteriaceae, or CRE, and similar outbreaks have been reported around the nation. They are difficult to treat because some varieties are resistant to most known antibiotics.

UCLA said Wednesday that the infections may have been transmitted through at least two contaminated endoscopes that were used to diagnose and treat pancreatic and bile-duct problems.

An endoscope — or more specifically in this case, a duodenoscope — is a thin, flexible fibre-optic tube that is inserted down the throat to enable a doctor to examine an organ. The device typically has a light and a miniature camera.

"We notified all patients who had this type of procedure, and we were using seven different scopes. Only two of them were found to be infected. In an abundance of caution, we notified everybody," UCLA spokeswoman Dale Tate said.

The two medical devices carried the bacteria even though they had been sterilized according to the manufacturer's specifications, UCLA said.

More than 500,000 patients undergo procedures using duodenoscopes in the U.S. every year, according to the FDA.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Washington

Anti-gay florist to appeal ruling

A florist in Washington state who refused to provide flowers for a gay wedding plans to appeal a judge's ruling that she broke a state anti-discrimination law.

Alliance Defending Freedom says the ruling threatens the financial ruin of 70-year-old Richland florist Barronelle Stutzman, along with her business, Arlene's Flowers. The organization says it will file the appeal on her behalf.

Benton County Superior Court Judge Alex Ekstrom on Wednesday rejected arguments that Stutzman's actions were protected by her freedoms of speech and religion.

Ekstrom says the First Amendment protects religious beliefs but not necessarily actions based on those beliefs. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Terrorism

PLO argues against compensating terror victims

The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Palestinian Authority should not be blamed for terror attacks in Israel that killed or wounded Americans in the early 2000s, the groups' lawyer told a New York City jury Thursday, but the victims' attorney insisted the organizations sanctioned the bloodshed.

The civil case in Manhattan and another in Brooklyn have emerged as the most notable attempts by American victims of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict to use U.S. courts to seek damages that could reach into the billions.

Defence attorney Mark Rochon said there was no proof the PLO sanctioned the six attacks alleged in a 2004 lawsuit. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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NAIT

Rebel fighters hug as they take control of key Ukrainian town

Debaltseve. Retreating Ukrainian soldiers grim with at least 13 dead and hundreds missing, captured

For the rebel fighters who seized control of this strategic town, Thursday was a day of jubilation and bragging of victory. The retreating Ukrainian soldiers were grim, stunned and relieved to have escaped with their lives as the scope of their losses became clearer: at least 13 dead and hundreds missing, captured or wounded.

Rebel fighters roamed the debris-littered streets of Debaltseve, laughing, hugging and posing for photos a day after the fall of the furiously contested railway hub. Associated Press journalists found its neighbourhoods destroyed and all under the control of the rebels.

On the road out of town, dozens of Ukrainian military vehicles, many riddled with bullet holes and with their windshields smashed, were heading to the government-held city of Artemivsk.

The soldiers inside described weeks of harrowing rebel shelling, followed by a hasty retreat.

"We left under heavy fire, driving on back roads," said a soldier who gave only his first name, Andrei. "As we were leaving, we were attacked by artillery and grenade launchers. We came under repeated attack by tanks and assault groups."

As rebels waved separatist flags, Nikolai Kozitsyn, a Russian Cossack leader and prominent warlord in the rebel-controlled east, drove around in a Humvee-like vehicle captured from Ukrainian troops.

All around lay the wrecked remains of Ukrainian armoured vehicles. Rebel fighters, many of them Cossacks, searched through the bunkers and tents of an abandoned military encampment, looking to salvage equipment and clothing left behind. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A pro-Russia rebel cossack, second left, hugs another rebel in Debaltseve, eastern Ukraine, Thursday. PETER LEONARD/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

President Barack Obama speaks at the Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Summit, Thursday. PABLO MARTINEZ MONSIVAIS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Muslims must fight 'ugly lie' that West is at war with Islam: Obama

President Barack Obama called on the world Thursday to confront efforts to use Islam to justify violence, saying Muslim communities in particular have a responsibility to push back on "twisted interpretations of Islam" and the belief that the West is at war with the religion.

With ISIL spreading and terrorists gaining strength in the Mideast and Africa, Obama has sought to use a White House summit this week on violent extremism to urge the world to broaden its response far beyond military interventions. U.S. airstrikes have managed to blunt some of the militants' gains in Iraq and Syria, but they don't address the extreme ideologies that underpin deadly groups such as ISIL, al-Shabab and Boko Haram. At the summit's closing session at the State Department, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said the United Nations system will work on a "comprehensive multi-stakeholder plan of action to prevent violent extremism" that will be presented to the General Assembly later this year. He said that as a first step, he will convene a special event in the next months "that will bring together faith leaders from all around the world to promote mutual understanding and reconciliation." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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NE023G215

Economy. Negative inflation likely: BoC

The turbulence of the global oil slump could briefly nudge the Canadian inflation rate into negative territory this spring, a senior Bank of Canada official said Thursday.

But deputy governor Agathe Cote offered some reassurance, saying that even if the annual rate dips below zero it would not be considered deflation. She noted that true deflation, which can be damaging for an economy, would require a period of widespread price declines.

"Rest assured — even if inflation turns negative for some time, that would not constitute deflation," Cote said in Mont-Tremblant, Que.

"When inflation expectations are solidly anchored, as is now the case in Canada, there is no reason to fear deflation." The central bank tries to keep inflation close to an ideal two per cent target and it can adjust its trend-setting interest rate to help the economy hit that bull's-eye. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Pipeline. TransCanada to seek approval for Upland

The Canadian company behind the long-delayed Keystone XL oil pipeline will seek U.S. government approval for another pipeline — this one going north.

Industry officials in North Dakota say the proposed Upland Pipeline could reduce reliance on the railroads to ship crude following recent concerns about safety.

TransCanada Corp.'s proposed $600-million US Upland Pipeline would begin near the northwestern North Dakota oil hub of Williston and go north into Canada about 320 kilometres. At peak operation it would transport up to 300,000 barrels of oil daily, connecting with other pipelines, including the Energy East pipeline across Canada.

TransCanada hopes to have the Upland Pipeline operating in 2018, pending approval from the U.S. State Department, North Dakota's Public Service Commission and Canada's National Energy Board. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Market Minute

DOLLAR 80.01¢ (-0.52¢)

TSX 15,180.33 (-32.42)

OIL $51.16 US (-98¢)

GOLD $1,207.60 US (+$7.40)

Natural gas: $2.834 US (-0.3¢)
Dow Jones: 17,985.77 (-44.08)

Walmart workers in U.S. getting raises

Wal-Mart Stores Inc. is spending $1 billion to make changes to how it pays and trains U.S. hourly workers as the embattled retailer tries to reshape the image that its Walmart stores offer dead-end jobs. As part of its biggest investment in worker training and pay ever, Wal-Mart Stores Inc. told The Associated Press that within the next six months, it will give raises to about 500,000 workers, or nearly 40 per cent of its 1.3 million U.S. employees. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

Battery maker files suit against Apple

Electric cars. A123 Systems alleges staff poached for nearly identical division

Battery maker A123 Systems is suing Apple, claiming it aggressively poached some key staff members in violation of their nondisclosure and non-compete agreements when they left A123.

According to a lawsuit filed in U.S. District Court in Massachusetts, A123 is seeking a restraining order and preliminary injunction to stop former employee Mujeeb Ijaz from hiring former A123 employees at Apple, where he now works. A123 makes lithium-ion batteries for electric cars and other products,

"It appears that Apple, with the assistance of defendant Ijaz, is systematically hiring away A123's high tech PhD and engineering employees, thereby effectively shutting down various projects/programs at A123," A123 says in the complaint.

General Motors and Tesla Motors have electric cars in the works, and Nissan is already selling an electric car called the Leaf.

The suit is the latest development in A123's checkered history. It received a $249-million US grant from the Department of Energy in August 2009 to help it build U.S. factories, but it posted repeated losses and struggled for several years as Americans have been slow to embrace electric cars. It filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in 2012, sold off assets and reorganized. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Coming down the wire

- General Motors said Thursday it will start building the Chevrolet Bolt electric car in 2017. It will have a 320-kilometre range and will cost $37,500 US.
- Tesla Motors plans to start selling a 320-kilometre-per-charge car about the same time. The Model 3 price is likely to be well below $30,000 US.

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VOICES

CELEBS DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY'RE TALKING ABOUT

THE KOHLER REPORT
By Rebecca Kohler

Is it just me, or has there been an uptick lately in celebrities touting pseudo-medical advice that seems particularly unsound? From weird pubic care to body-binding workout regimes, the tabloids are starting to look more like quack medical encyclopedias than entertaining gossip rags.

One of the most recent examples of weird body-care advice comes from Gwyneth Paltrow vis-à-vis the V-Steam. Gwyneth recently wrote a post on her lifestyle website, GOOP, about how she had her vagina steamed: "You sit on what is essentially a mini-throne, and a combination of infrared and mugwort steam cleanses your uterus, et al," she said. "If you're in L.A., you have to do it." Sorry, G., but I have my next trip to L.A. all planned out and it involves eating tacos, not cleansing them.

While I used to view celebrity advice and websites such as GOOP as just irritating (GOOP is hard for me to read because my eyes won't stop rolling), I'm starting to wonder if this stuff is actually dangerous.

After Gwyn poached her pants area, doctors went berserk online, citing all sorts of reasons why that is a terrible idea. That part of the female body has an ecosystem, and sending steam through the chute has the potential to throw it off balance. I'd say the idiom, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it" has never been truer than when referring to a vagina.

Kim Kardashian has also touted some iffy practices to the common people. Kim is a fan and advocate of "waist training," which involves wearing a corset, even while you work out — the stupid idea being that you sweat more in your abdomen area. Also, the corset is making your waist tinier because ... well it's not, because that's impossible. Look, I get the science behind binding a baby, but trying to shrink your waist as an adult? You're fully grown, and your bones are hard. Deal. But KK has posted several selfies in her corset, and the masses are listening.

Doctors are upset about the corsets, too. Wearing a corset for extended periods of time — "waist trainers" wear them for up to 12 hours a day — can not only weaken your abdominal muscles but also actually make them atrophy. "Look at my tiny waist! Pay no attention to the shrivelled, dead muscle."

Then there's Selma Hayek, a vocal fan of juice cleanses and/or detoxes who insists that's how she maintains her sexy figure. Studies prove both of these practices to be useless.

No steaming necessary

After Gwyn poached her pants area, doctors went berserk online, citing all sorts of reasons as to why that is a terrible idea.

Real doctors will tell you that your body has a natural detoxification system in place — liver, lungs, skin, etc. — and doesn't need your help.

Let's not forget the celebrity anti-vaxxers who may or may not be partly responsible for the recent measles outbreak in North America. Jenny McCarthy is famously outspoken in saying vaccinations cause autism — which, for the MILLIONTH time, they DON'T — and reality star Kristin Cavallari joined in the fun last year, stating, "There are very scary statistics out there regarding ... vaccines and what they cause: asthma, allergies, ear infections ..." Ear infections? Seriously, lady? Even if that were true, are you saying you'd rather your kid get measles than an ear infection? (I got an ear infection just listening to the interview.)

Considering celebs are rich and successful and generally good-looking, it makes sense that people would look to them for life advice. But as "successful" as someone like Kim Kardashian is, we have to remember she's not a professional of any sort. The best teachings she has to offer probably involve dislodging a bad wedgie.

Please don't take advice from celebrities because a) it can be dangerous; b) it'll cost you a fortune; and, c) when we hear these snippets about their "amazing lives," we're not getting the full story. Did it ever occur to Salma Hayek that she's hot because she can afford $800 face creams and personal trainers and chefs to cook her healthy meals? Gwyneth Paltrow might be steaming her vagina to fill a void (no pun intended) left by her "conscious uncoupling," and Kim Kardashian's waist looks small because she has big boobs and a booty. As for Kristin Cavallari, not vaccinating her kids might be her best bet at getting any sort of publicity. If you absolutely feel like your vagina needs a steam (mine is pretty steamy on its own) or you could lose a few pounds or inches, then OK, but talk to a doctor first. I know your doctor is boring compared to a Hollywood star, but that's because he/she studied a lot to know what's best for you.

Rebecca Kohler is a stand-up comic, writer, actor, gymnast, lawyer and chemist. (Some of this isn't true.) Follow her on Twitter @becca_kohler

Happy face/Sad face

From top dogs to uncomfortable visits, Metro weighs in on the news that made headlines this week:

FAKING IT

Oregon man Aleksander Tomaszewski, who was arrested on suspicion of sexual assault, has gained a couple new charges after allegedly beating himself up while in custody and trying to blame police for his injuries. Video shows a man punching himself in the face as many as 60 times in his holding cell. Just a reminder folks, Big Brother is watching you. Especially if you're in a police station.

DOG-GONE RIGHT!

America's top dog is a Canuck! A mild-mannered beagle named Miss P was named Best in Show at the prestigious Westminster Kennel Club at Madison Square Garden this week. The pooch, who originally hails from Enderby, B.C., has already made the morning talk-show circuit and met Donald Trump.

ROYALLY EMBARRASSING

Like any obligatory trip home to see the parents whose privilege you've spent a lifetime trying to escape but never fully disowned, Canada's visits to England always feel a little off. This time, the weirdness took place at Thursday's official reopening of Canada's newly refurbished high commission in London. Unaccountably, John Baird was there representing us. He's even referred to as foreign minister on the commemorative plaque. You'll recall, of course, that he quit that job weeks ago. Yeah. Awkward.

TIGHTY WHITEYS

This week in amazing excuses: a Manitoba MP is holding cheap, ill-fitting underwear to account for a "brief" absence from his seat in the House of Commons while a vote was being counted. "I can blame it on a sale that was down at the Hudson's Bay; they had men's underwear on for half price. I bought a bunch that was clearly too small," said Winnipeg Centre representative Pat Martin. Cheeky, Mr. Martin, very cheeky.

STRIP-SEARCHED TEEN

Quebec school officials are under serious fire after strip-searching a 15-year-old student over suspicions she was hiding marijuana. The province's education minister defended such searches as a reasonable safety measure provided they are done in a "respectful" manner. The girl's parents and civil-rights groups vocally disagree.

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2 SCENE

Focus on fashion

Kathy Griffin
GETTY IMAGES

Kathy Griffin is ready to rip on the red carpet

Kathy Griffin likes to joke (or is she serious?) that, one year on her tax return, she put her profession as "Anonymous." Such is her multi-hyphenate stature: a standup comic, sitcom star, reality-show queen, periodic D-Lister and, now, host of Fashion Police, E! network's couture critique.

Griffin has retrieved the mantel from Joan Rivers, who presided riotously in cahoots with her Joan Rangers until her death last summer.

"She obviously left very big shoes," said Griffin.

"But we agree that it's essential to comedy to be fearless and not be afraid to make enemies — certainly, in Hollywood! C'mon, we're not talking about heads of state here."

As for viewing, Griffin says: "I haven't decided whether to go to a party where I can get more material, or just watch at home, judging harshly in silence."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NPH's time to shine

Interview. First-time Academy Awards host talks about nerves, his hosting heroes and what he'll do if Kanye crashes the stage

Neil Patrick Harris might use his job as Oscar host as a way to meet his favourite stars. "I have, essentially, an all-access pass to the theatre," Harris said during a recent interview.

"So I love being able to stand there and say hello to people I've never met before. I'm very easily star struck, so it'll be very exciting to shake hands with celebrities."

Harris has hosted the Emmys twice and the Tony Awards four times — and has won both awards. On Sunday, he takes on his first Oscar show. The multitalented entertainer took a few minutes between rehearsals to talk about his plans for the big night.

How is preparing to host the Oscars different from the Tonys or Emmys?
I want to make sure my content is inclusive of everyone watching, and more people watch the Oscars than any other awards show probably combined. I have more filters probably, in terms of content... The Oscars — it's ritual for many people. They see it every single year, and all around the world. So I want to be a little classier and try to be a bit more mainstream while trying to maintain a wink and a nod to those in the know.

You watched all the past Oscar hosts as part of your research. Who stood out for you, and who would you most like to emulate?
My initial answer would probably be Billy Crystal. I was just the right age to be so taken by movies as an idea, and he had such joy and exuberance about the world of film... But as I've done more research, I'm even more impressed now by the older-school generation of Johnny Carson, Bob Hope, and their ability to stand in one place and make (people) feel comfortable just in their demeanour. Because it's a very classy night — everyone's in their tuxedoes and fancy dresses — so I'm hoping to make it feel like an A-list dinner party that you get to come and attend.

How nervous are you?
Well, my job as host is to not be nervous when the show is happening. But I think, in life, being nervous about something that's forthcoming is very helpful, whether it's an awards show or a family gathering or a job interview. If you're too calm and confident, then I think you aren't executing to the best of your ability. So I try not to let nerves get the best of me, but I welcome them because it tends to fuel me to try harder.

Have you prepared for the possibility of Kanye West coming onstage?
I think the security at Saturday Night Live is still holding him in his seat there from last (week's) show. So, fingers crossed, he's detained in New York City. No, nothing would make me happier than something as random as that, as Kanye West deciding to participate in the show in some way. That's why you want to watch the Oscars. We hope for things to happen that you'll only experience by watching it... The crazier the better, as far as I'm concerned.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

What to watch and when

CTV begins Oscar coverage at 4:00 p.m. on Sunday.

- ETalk's Red Carpet Special starts at 4:00 MT. Ben Mulroney and Lainey Lui will be on a balcony capturing a bird's eye view of red carpet arrivals.
- The Oscars Opening Ceremony, hosted by Good Morning America anchors Robin Roberts and Lara Spencer, starts at 5 p.m., showcasing the nominees, presenters and performers arriving on the ABC red carpet.
- The main event starts at 6:30 p.m.
- You have to be a subscriber to CTV Go to watch the broadcast online. Anyone can stream coverage from the Academy Awards press room at ctv.ca.

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If Metro could hack the Academy vote

Rather than waste your time with Oscar predictions, which are bound to be wrong anyway, here's something slightly more useful: What we'd pick, if anyone had asked us.

NED EHRBAR & MATT PRIGGE
For Metro

Best picture

What should win: Wes Anderson's Grand Budapest Hotel is the kind of carefully crafted, completely realized vision that should be edging out Boyhood and Birdman.

What should have been nominated: If the Academy had any guts it would have celebrated the singular vision of Dan Gilroy's Nightcrawler.

Wes Anderson GETTY IMAGES

Best director

Who should win: Given he's created his own style of filmmaking, it's incredible The Grand Budapest Hotel's Wes Anderson hasn't won a directing Oscar yet.

Who should have been nominated: With the ScarJo alien opus Under the Skin, Jonathan Glazer created a genuinely unique film.

Best actor

Who should win: Hype demands Michael Keaton or Eddie Redmayne win this, but Bradley Cooper's steely and very, very, very quietly anguished turn in American Sniper was one of the reasons the film was more complicated than its fans and detractors claim.

Who should have been nominated: Mysteriously, Ralph Fiennes' super-alert creation — Monsieur Gustave H. in Wes Anderson's The Grand Budapest Hotel — both debonair and lowbrow (and sometimes in the same rattled-off line), was snubbed in favour of actors mostly playing real people.

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Best actress

Who should win: For once, everyone seems to be in agreement, because no performance this year came close to inevitable winner Julianne Moore for Still Alice.

Who should have been nominated: Into the Woods might not have done much this awards season, but Emily Blunt still deserves recognition for her standout work in the Sondheim musical.

Julianne Moore GETTY IMAGES

Best supporting actress

Who should win: Let's hear it for Keira Knightley, who took what could have been a rather dull, throw-away supporting role in The Imitation Game and quietly ran away with the film, outshining even co-star and fellow nominee Benedict Cumberbatch.

Who should have been nominated: Rene Russo stepped back into the spotlight in outstanding fashion as a cutthroat, desperate local news producer in Nightcrawler.

Keira Knightley and Benedict Cumberbatch CONTRIBUTED

Best original screenplay

What should win: Wes Anderson's films are constructed top-to-bottom, and the riots of pink and spot-on performances in The Grand Budapest Hotel are nothing without the solid foundation of its script.

What should have been nominated: Justin Simien's Dear White People shuffles around a score of characters and provocative ideas like pieces on a chessboard.

Best adapted screenplay

What should win: Paul Thomas Anderson should take this one. He did the impossible in bringing a Thomas Pynchon novel to the screen.

What should have been nominated: The Writers Guild decided "Guardians of the Galaxy" was worthy of recognition, so why couldn't the Academy? Yes, it's a comic book movie, but it's a damn fine comic book movie adapted from some off-the-wall source material.

Supporting actor

Who should win: He may be only slightly less intimidating than his Oz Neo-Nazi, but J.K. Simmons' jazz instructor in Whiplash was still a thoroughly embodied portrait of a sociopath.

Who should have been nominated: As a 60-year-old virgin, Stellan Skarsgard helped make sure Lars Von Trier's porn epic Nymphomaniac was the infamous filmmaker's funniest and most humane film.

J.K. Simmons GETTY IMAGES

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Drama

McFarland

Director. Niki Caro

Stars. Kevin Costner, Carlos Pratt

From Disney comes McFarland, the true against-all-odds story of the 1987 McFarland high school cross-country team in an economically challenged community.

Rotten Tomatoes™ score
Critics: 67% **Audience:** + 87%

Comedy

The DUFF

Director. Ari Sandel

Stars. Mae Whitman, Robbie Amell

Bianca is a high school senior whose world is shattered when she learns the student body knows her as 'The DUFF' (Designated Ugly Fat Friend) to her prettier, more popular friends. Now, despite the words of caution from her favourite teacher, she puts aside the potential distraction of her crush and enlists Wesley, a slick but charming jock, to help reinvent herself.

Rotten Tomatoes™ score
Critics: 88% **Audience:** + 91%

Romance

Fifty Shades of Grey

Director. Sam Taylor-Johnson

Stars. Jamie Dornan, Dakota Johnson

E.L. James' kinky bestseller gets the big-screen treatment with this Universal Pictures/Focus Features co-production. The steamy tale details a masochistic relationship between a college student and a businessman, whose desires for extreme intimacy stem from secrets in his past.

Rotten Tomatoes™ score
Critics: 25% **Audience:** 50%

Comedy

Hot Tub Time Machine 2

Director. Steve Pink

Stars. Craig Robinson, Rob Corddry

Hot Tub Time Machine director Steve Pink returns to the helm for this sequel set 10 years in the future, and starring Rob Corddry, Adam Scott, Clark Duke, and Craig Robinson.

Rotten Tomatoes™ score
Critics: No reviews yet **Audience:** + 92%

Mystery & Suspense

Kingsman: The Secret Service

Director. Matthew Vaughn

Stars. Colin Firth, Michael Caine

Based upon the acclaimed comic book and directed by Matthew Vaughn, Kingsman: The Secret Service tells the story of a super-secret spy organization that recruits an unrefined but promising street kid into the agency's ultra-competitive training program just as a global threat emerges from a twisted tech genius.

Rotten Tomatoes™ score
Critics: 77% **Audience:** 88%

Documentary

Keep On Keepin' On

Director. Alan Hicks

Stars. Clark Terry, Herbie Hancock

Shot over five years by filmmaker Al Hicks, Keep On Keepin' On depicts the remarkable story of 93-year-old jazz legend Clark Terry. A living monument to the Golden Era of Jazz, Terry — a mentor to Miles Davis — is among the few performers ever to have played in both Count Basie's and Duke Ellington's bands.

Rotten Tomatoes™ score
Critics: 97% **Audience:** 88%

Adam Scott slips into Hot Tub Time Machine

Movies. Stepping into comedy sequel was like going to summer camp with friends, says the Parks and Rec actor

MATT PRIGGE
Metro in New York City

Adam Scott wasn't always a comedic actor. He went to drama school, had stints on Party of Five and Six Feet Under, did a sex-heavy relationship drama at HBO (Tell Me You Love Me) and has been in action (Torque), drama (High Crimes) and a Martin Scorsese movie (The Aviator). But after his turn as Will Ferrell's douchebag corporate shark brother in Step Brothers, he was suddenly part of the comedy fold, appearing in the brilliant but cancelled Party Down and the just-wrapped Parks and Recreation. With Hot Tub Time Machine 2, Scott pops up in another ongoing series, playing the son of John Cusack (who is AWOL) from the far-off future of 2024.

You're no stranger to joining things that are already midstream. Was joining the Hot Tub Time Machine franchise in its first sequel any different?

I already knew Rob (Corddry), Craig (Robinson) and Clark (Duke), so it was easy. I think I said yes before they even wrote it. Steve (Pink), the director, just pitched me a rough idea and I said sure. It was like going to summer camp in New Orleans with your friends. It didn't really feel like work. I feels like you're hanging out with your friends and someone happens to be filming it. I've been lucky to be in a bunch of TV shows and movies that are like that. I would love to hang around and make d— jokes with Rob, Craig and Clark whether it was being filmed or not. It's just a happy coincidence that we got a movie out of it.

But it's not all play, though. You still have to make a movie.

It is work. We are working 15-hour days. It is actual work, and we're tired at the end of the day. It's not like it was a vacation. We all worked really hard to make a good movie. We weren't just trying to make ourselves laugh. We were always trying to find what makes the best scene. It was work, but getting to work with your friends is the best-case scenario. I'm lucky enough to have friends who are really talented and funny and really great actors. It's just a bonus that you get to work with people you enjoy.

Your character here is very earnest and childlike.

It's a fun exercise in every scene to find the most oblivious route to go. I think my character's just happy to have some friends. He's the kind of guy who annoys people with his curiosity and his earnest view of the world. So he doesn't have a lot of male friends. He's not able to tell he's annoying the s— out of them.

This isn't hard sci-fi, but it is a film about a future in which not a ton has changed.

Part of that was it wasn't like we had $80 million to make a new future. They were smart to only go 10 years, where things have changed slightly but we're essentially the same. There's a couple of minimal ways things have changed. I feel like entertainment has definitely been degraded to the point of people just watching other people suffer on television. Generally people in the film are stupider, which I think we can probably count on.

Adam Scott with Gillian Jacobs in Hot Tub Time Machine 2. CONTRIBUTED

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A tale of small-town sports success

Biopic. Running coach who was the inspiration behind McFarland film remains humble despite Hollywood treatment

Carlos Pratts, left, and Kevin Costner appear in a scene from McFarland. RON PHILLIPS/DISNEY

Jim and Cheryl White have seen the movie McFarland three times and teared up at every viewing, even though, as he says, "We knew what was going to happen."

The film, which stars Kevin Costner as the most successful Californian high school cross-country coach in history, is the story of White, his wife and their life and work in McFarland, Calif., an impoverished town transformed by sports.

The Texas native taught in McFarland for 40 years, establishing a cross-country running team that would win nine state championships and give the runners a glimpse of life outside their small town and nearby fields where many of them worked as migrant "pickers."

His success may have earned him a Hollywood biopic and a more permanent tribute in the form of a dedicated gazebo in the town square, but he sees his influence in more metaphysical terms. "To me, my legacy is in the hearts and minds of these boys I've taught," he says.

In person, White is a humble man who quietly commands respect. At a post-screening Q&A I hosted with him in Toronto, he earned a standing ovation before even saying a word. As the audience clapped he was genuinely moved, and with a quivering voice whispered to me to "take over for a second."

Earlier in the day, we discussed seeing his life played out on the big screen. "We just hoped they could portray our true feelings of love for the town, for the community. That came across real well. We also felt like they portrayed the true hardships these boys went through."

Hollywood did make some changes to White's story and one scene in particular irked him. When we first see White in the film, he's hurling a cleated shoe at the lippy captain of his Idaho school football team, opening the kid's cheek.

"That is dramatic licence," he says. "It bothered me for a while but I talked to Kevin Costner about it. I said, 'Kevin, can you give me your true feelings about the situation that happened in Idaho?' He said, 'I think, Jim, you're going to come across as the hero and not the villain because you're standing up for what's right.' I said, 'All right,' and I was satisfied with that."

White often uses the phrase "Well, that's Hollywood for you," when describing the making of the film and liberties taken with his life's story. But now the movie is finished, he says, "What was really fascinating to both of us was watching the screen and seeing them say, 'Mr. White would you come in here,' (or) 'Jim White this, and Cheryl White that.' We're sitting there looking at ourselves up there. It was kind of funny."

In Focus

RICHARD CROUSE

In Review

Hot Tub Time Machine 2

McFarland

The DUFF

Wrecking Crew

Lifetime achievement

Cardinal to receive award combining acting and activism

Tantoo Cardinal NADIA KWANDIBENS

As Métis actress Tantoo Cardinal prepares to receive a lifetime achievement award, she remembers what originally inspired her to begin acting more than 40 years ago: anger.

"It wasn't about a career at all — it was about having a voice," the Edmonton-raised 64-year-old said in a telephone interview this week. "I don't know if people really can appreciate what that experience is — of attempted genocide, generations and generations and generations where your language is outlawed, your creativity is outlawed, anything you think or say or do is actually outlawed.

"There was a fire inside," she continued. "I had a huge rage inside about the way my people were perceived and the injustice of that. I have to cling to conviction, because that's my gun, you know?"

On Friday, Cardinal will receive ACTRA Toronto's Award of Excellence, a career-spanning honour previously presented to Rick Mercer, Fiona Reid and Shirley Douglas.

The award simultaneously recognizes a body of work and commitment to advocacy, and for Cardinal there was rarely much of a distinction between the two. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Bite into Academy Award luxury

This recipe makes approximately 24 appetizers. COURTESY RICARDOCUISINE.COM

Appetizers. Escargot and Garlic Stuffed Tomato Tarts are perfect for your glam party

RICARDO COOKS
Chef Ricardo
Ricardo Magazine

Hosting an Academy Awards screening party? Save the chips and dip for a less grandiose event. This super-chic soiree needs a healthy dose of luxe! Think escargot and, of course, plenty of bubbly.

When making these appetizers, make sure you prick the dough thoroughly, because the tomatoes can easily fall on the side while baking.

Simply place them back when arranging them on a serving platter.

1. With the rack in the middle position, preheat the oven to 400 F (200 C). Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

2. On a lightly floured surface, roll out the dough to about 1/8 inch (3 mm) thick. With a 1 3/4-inch (4.5 cm) round cookie cutter, make enough circles to match your quantity of snails. With a fork, prick the centre of the dough several times. Place on the baking sheet and refrigerate.

3. Cut off the tomato caps, then cut off a thin slice at the base so they stand in place. Remove the flesh with a small melon baller. Set aside.

4. In a skillet, melt the butter with the garlic. Add the snails and cook for about 1 minute while stirring. Add the chives. Season with pepper. Stuff each tomato with a snail. Set aside.

5. In a bowl, combine the sour cream and mustard. Brush over each circle of dough. Top with the stuffed tomatoes. Drizzle with the remaining garlic butter. Bake until golden brown, about 20 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Serve warm as an hors d'oeuvre.

FOLLOW RICARDO ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND ON RICARDOCUISINE.COM OR SUBSCRIBE TO HIS MAGAZINE'S ENGLISH EDITION, WHICH LAUNCHED IN 2014.

Ingredients

- 1/2 lb (225 g) thawed and cold puff pastry
- 24 cherry tomatoes
- 1/4 cup (57 g) butter
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 can (200 g) snails, rinsed and drained (about 24 snails)
- 1 tbsp chopped fresh chives or thyme leaves
- Salt and pepper
- 2 tbsp (30 ml) sour cream
- 1 1/2 tsp (7.5 ml) Dijon mustard

Liquid Assets

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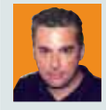

LIQUID ASSETS
Peter Rockwell
@therealwineguy
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Though it may be one of the most popular fruits in the world (and yes, technically it is a fruit) the affable tomato can be, in a word, challenging when it comes to a wine match.

When I first read Chef Ricardo's recipe for escargot and garlic stuffed tomato tarts, I couldn't help but feel a bit like Indiana Jones when he realized the temple was full of snakes in Raiders of the Lost Ark.

To paraphrase: Tomatoes. Why did it have to be tomatoes?

Not that they're impossible to partner with wine. It's just that their forward acidity and ripe, fruity juiciness can be an off-putting counterpoint to the vivacious personalities of many wines.

A foodie friend of mine adores a Sauvignon Blanc-based white with tomatoes. I lean towards an acid-forward red like an Italian Sangiovese.

While Italy's Chianti region in Tuscany is considered Sangiovese's true home, Farnese's 2013 Fantini Sangiovese IGT ($7.95 to $10.49), made in Abbruzo, is as soft on the palate as it is on the pocketbook.

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SPORTS 4

‘I’m going to be a much better fighter’

UFC. MacDonald learns from his two losses, ready to show his true self in title match

Rory MacDonald last fought Tarec Saffiedine in October. MacDonald won via a third-round TKO.
ANDREW VAUGHAN/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Rory MacDonald has lost just twice in 10 years and learned from both setbacks.

In 2010 in Vancouver, he let the emotion of the crowd and fighting in his home province get to him in his second UFC outing. Veteran Carlos (The Natural Born Killer) Condit rallied to put MacDonald away with just seven seconds remaining at UFC 115.

Against (Ruthless) Robbie Lawler at UFC 167 in Las Vegas in 2013, a lacklustre training camp was followed by an uneven performance that was not helped by a third-round poke in the eye. MacDonald had his moments but not enough of them and lost a split decision.

Now MacDonald (18-2) is getting a second crack at Lawler, this time for the welterweight championship. The 25-year-old Montreal-based fighter has been matched against Lawler (25-10 with one no contest) in the co-main event of UFC 189 on July 11 in Las Vegas.

“I’m going to be a much better fighter for this one,” MacDonald said in an interview Thursday, one day after the fight announcement.

His first meeting with Lawler, however painful, proved to be worthwhile.

“I’m grateful (for) the experience I had that night with Robbie,” MacDonald said.

“It really was a kick in the ass and a blessing in disguise. I was upset about it but I can’t explain how much that motivated me to get myself back into where I need to be. I wasn’t at my best for that fight and it was my fault.”

After the Condit loss, MacDonald learned not to bring emotion into the cage with him. His normal pre-fight demeanour is so cool that the ringside doctor might be tempted to feel for a pulse.

But against Lawler, he could not wait for training camp and fight night to be over “so I could go relax and just get away from martial arts for a bit.”

In the wake of the loss, he adopted a new attitude.

“Just having fun with martial arts and getting back to that passion and enjoying my life in martial arts,” he said. “That’s all.” THE CANADIAN PRES

Three wins in a row

MacDonald has posted impressive wins over Demian Maia, Tyron Woodley and Tarec Saffiedine since losing to Lawler in November 2013.

NHL

Islanders stop Preds’ winning streak at 6 games

Nick Leddy had a goal and two assists, Jaroslav Halak tied the team record for wins in a season, and the New York Islanders cooled off the NHL-leading Nashville Predators with a 5-2 win on Thursday night.

Brian Strait, John Tavares and Johnny Boychuk scored in the first for the Islanders, who snapped Nashville’s six-game winning streak with their sixth victory in seven games. Tavares has at least one goal in each of his last four games.

Leddy and Josh Bailey scored 1:39 apart in the third to break open a one-goal nailbiter. Halak made 30 saves for his 32nd win for the Islanders, who started the night one point off the Eastern Conference lead. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Canucks get the best of Rangers in a shootout

Alexandre Burrows and Radim Vrbata scored in a shootout and the Vancouver Canucks rallied three times to post a 5-4 victory over the Rangers on Thursday night, ending New York’s four-game winning streak.

Henrik Sedin scored twice for the Canucks, including a tying goal with 2:00 left in regulation after Vancouver pulled goaltender Ryan Miller early.

Miller finished with 30 saves. Shawn Matthias and Bo Horvat also tallied as Vancouver snapped a five-game losing streak against the Rangers dating to January 2011. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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metro

Top skips Jones, Sweeting to meet twice on Friday

Scotties. With doubleheader ahead, final day of round robin promises lots of drama

Val Sweeting was celebrating after topping Team Canada's Rachel Homan on Thursday afternoon in Moose Jaw, Sask. Sweeting faces Jennifer Jones Friday night in the Page Playoff for the right to go straight through to Sunday's final.
JONATHAN HAYWARD/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Manitoba's Jennifer Jones strengthened her grip on second place at the Scotties Tournament of Hearts on Thursday with a 10-3 rout of Prince Edward Island's Suzanne Birt and a 6-3 win over Northern Ontario's Tracy Horgan.

Jones improved to 9-1 and trailed only Val Sweeting of Alberta in the round-robin standings.

Sweeting scored two in the last end for a dramatic 7-6 victory over Canada's Rachel Homan in the afternoon draw before a stunning 9-1 loss to Saskatchewan's Stefanie Lawton in the evening draw in Moose Jaw, Sask.

But the afternoon victory in the rematch of last year's Scotties final gives Sweeting a berth in the one-two Page Playoff game Friday night against Jones.

"We just have to stay strong now," Sweeting said. "Momentum is good going into the playoffs. We just want to finish strong and hopefully just come out on top."

Sweeting and Jones will play twice on Friday. They'll meet in the round-robin finale in the morning, with the winner to earn the first seed.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

NBA

OKC's Westbrook up to old tricks as play resumes

Russell Westbrook had 34 points and 10 assists to help the Thunder defeat the Dallas Mavericks 104-89 on Thursday night in Oklahoma City.

Serge Ibaka had 21 points and a career-high 22 rebounds and reserve guard Anthony Morrow added 16 points for the Thunder, who won for the sixth time in seven games. They moved into a tie with Phoenix for eighth place in the Western Conference.

The Thunder rolled, despite getting just 12 points from Kevin Durant.

Dirk Nowitzki had 14 points and Tyson Chandler added 10 points and 13 rebounds for the Mavericks, who shot a season-low 36.3 per cent from the field.

Dallas point guard Rajon Rondo returned after missing six games with broken bones in his face. He finished with five points and six assists in 30 minutes. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Faces changing places

A flurry of trades were made before the 3 p.m. EST deadline Thursday. The following are just some of the reported players that were dealt.

Goran Dragic
GETTY IMAGES

- Goran Dragic and Isaiah Thomas, were among five players traded by the Suns in a major overhaul at deadline.

Kevin Garnett
GETTY IMAGES

- Kevin Garnett also has a new address — his original NBA one. The Timberwolves brought him back to Minnesota by sending Thaddeus Young to Brooklyn.
- The Oklahoma City Thunder traded Reggie Jackson to the Detroit Pistons and acquired Enes Kanter from the Utah Jazz on Thursday.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Interested individuals who possess the skills described above are requested to submit their resume and cover letter via email to hr@metronews.ca no later than February 20, 2015. PLEASE QUOTE: "Receptionist/Sales Coordinator - Edmonton" in the subject line. All submissions will be treated as confidential.

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AUGMENTED REALITY

Stuck on 12 Across? Scan this image with your Metro News app for today's crossword and Sudoku answers. It's OK. No one's watching.

Horoscopes by Sally Brompton

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
As your ruler Mars moves into your sign today you will be in an assertive mood. Just be careful not to get too domineering for some people's tastes.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
If you can't get what you want over the next 24 hours you will get the chance to make up for it tomorrow. The only thing you have to fear is fear itself.

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
You are so enthusiastic about something that you cannot understand why some people are being so negative about it. Maybe they have looked at the situation in a balanced way.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
You could easily lose patience with someone on the work front today, but hold back from saying anything too negative. They could make things tough for you later.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
You are in a helpful mood at the moment, but don't be too helpful. Do you want to end up doing so much for others that you have no time to do anything for yourself?

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
A financial opportunity is worth pursuing but the planets warn it may not be as great as you've been led to believe. There will be a lot of work involved.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
As Venus, planet of love, moves into the relationship area of your chart today it's likely you will meet someone who gets your pulse racing. Don't get carried away — yet.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Certain chores may be tiresome but there is no way you can get out of them so you might as well do the best possible job.

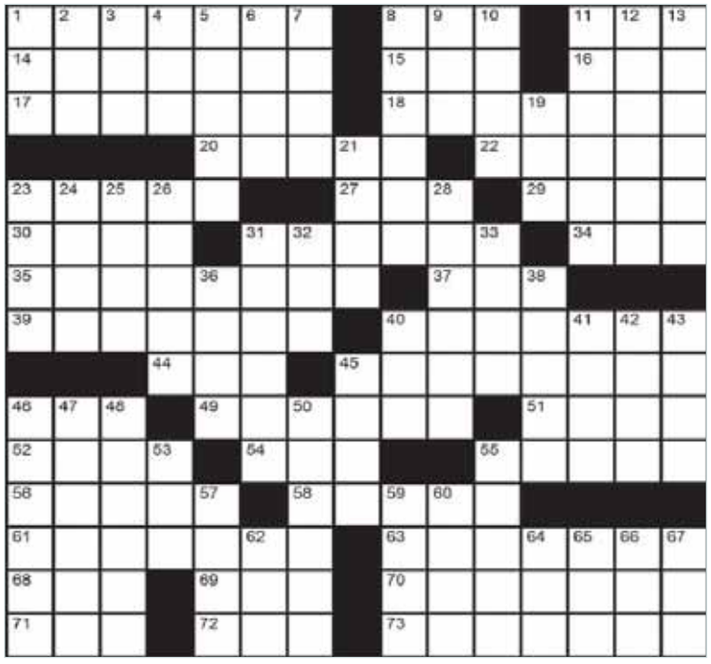
♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Don't make any travel plans for today or tomorrow because there is something special coming your way and if you move you may miss it.

♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
Mars in the domestic sector of your chart is likely to spark family squabbles but they are really not that important. Also, with Venus working in your favour you can calm things down. Be the voice of reason.

♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Social activities will be fun over the next few days but there will be challenges too. Someone you meet could rub you the wrong way over something trivial but it's really no big deal.

♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
You may lose your cool about something that normally would not bother you. If you do, calm down and have the good grace to admit you went over the top.

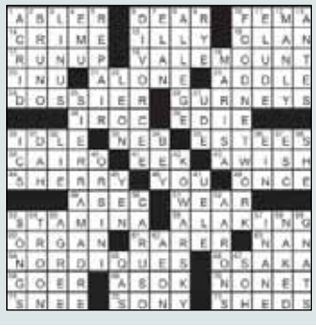
Crossword: Canada Across and Down by Kelly Ann Buchanan



Across
1. Oscars 2015: Dean __, Canadian director (with Bonnie Arnold) who is up for an Oscar for #50-Down at this weekend's ceremonies
8. __ for the cameras
11. Drink delicately
14. Ferocious fire
15. Fit Fiddle link: 2 wds.
16. __'easter
17. Conquers
18. TV Western on which #11-Down's director Clint Eastwood starred
20. Prefix to 'comedy'
22. Military caps
23. Domicile
27. Movie studio area
29. Quebec singer Mr. Simard
30. Uncommon
31. Health resort amenities
34. Soak flax
35. Keep from happening
37. New Zealand parrot
39. Take off with the cash
40. Super salty splashy spot: 2 wds.
44. "Won-der-ful!"
45. Oscars 2015: As per #1-Across and #70-Across... __ Feature Film
46. Inquire
49. 1971 Elton John album: '__ Across the Water'
51. Ski __
52. Red veggie
54. Three, in Italy
55. Exits-not
56. Country singer Mr. Jackson's
58. Mr. Agassi
61. Locale
63. Backslide
68. Rock producer Brian
69. Philosopher, __-tzu
70. Oscars 2015: As the co-director of "The Boxtrolls" (2014), Canadian cartoonist Graham __ is up for an Oscar in the category at #45-Across
71. __ Antonio
72. Barbie's boyfriend
73. Adieu!

Down
1. Fared
2. Mariner's dir.
3. Texter's pal
4. Liberace's nickname
5. Pontificate
6. Book's foreword [abbr.]
7. Baseball's Sammy
8. Oscars 2015: Best Actress nominee Ms. Cotillard
9. Can. neighbour
10. Look bewilderedly
11. Oscars 2015: Best Picture nominee, "American __" (2014)
12. Antiseptic
13. Adjust ahead of time
19. HRH part
21. Paste
23. Italian harp
24. Dig
25. Finds in mines
26. Record label
28. Absorb the knowledge: 2 wds.
31. Tropical vacation headgear
32. Supplement
33. Crease
36. Some soil
38. Go with the flow
40. CSI evidence
41. Athena's walkway
42. Like a Conger
43. Tangy quaffs
45. "Farewell, Father!"
46. Puts down
47. Ms. Gomez
48. Oscars 2015: Best Actor nominee, Michael __
50. Oscars 2015: "How To Train Your __ 2" (2014)
53. Blasting letters
55. Repetition mark, in music
57. Fancy fabric
59. Downer
60. Gambling mecca
62. Dundee denial
64. "Totally awesome"
65. Sort of tide
66. Knavish
67. Envision

Yesterday's Crossword



Online

See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.

9		7		1		6	2	
					9			3
1				2	6			8
						1	4	
4		2		8		3		7
	7	9						
6			8	5				9
5			2					
	3	8		6		2		4

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Yesterday's Sudoku

5	8	7	1	2	4	6	3	9
3	4	1	6	7	9	8	5	2
6	9	2	8	5	3	7	4	1
1	6	3	4	8	2	9	7	5
4	7	5	3	9	6	1	2	8
9	2	8	7	1	5	4	6	3
2	5	4	9	6	1	3	8	7
7	1	6	5	3	8	2	9	4
8	3	9	2	4	7	5	1	6

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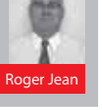
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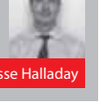
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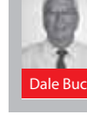
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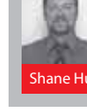
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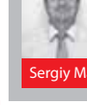
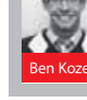

Sergiy Maslovsky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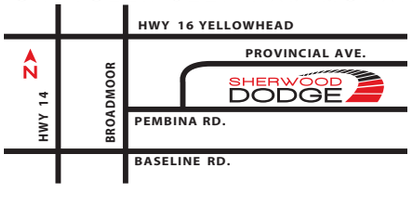

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